

IN RECOGNITION OF LEWISVILLE
ISD'S MARCHING BANDS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Flower Mound, Marcus, and Hebron High School bands for their noteworthy success at the 2016 UIL Class 6A Marching Band Contest. These Lewisville ISD bands achieved the first, second and third place honors, setting a first-time UIL record for a single school district to win the top three spots in the largest classification. Their outstanding performances were made possible through the talents, perseverance and hard work of the band students under the incredible leadership of Brent Biskup at Flower Mound, Andy Sealey at Hebron, and Amanda Drinkwater at Marcus.

The Flower Mound High School band won the state marching contest for the first time in the school's history as well as secured its second consecutive top spot at the Bands of America Super Regional competition four days earlier. Their rise to victory is no doubt due to their creative and extraordinary dedication to their craft. Hebron High School took a narrow second place, and their achievements this year have served to inspire the students around them. Marcus High School finished in third place, and had previously been consecutive five-time winners. Their long-term success reflects well on the organization and the students and parents who make the show possible.

It is a privilege to represent these bands and the Lewisville Independent School District in the U.S. House of Representatives. I look forward to seeing more great accomplishments from LISD and their bands and wish them the best of luck in all future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES AF-
FECTED BY THE NATIONAL
OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to include in the RECORD today the personal stories of families from across the country that have been affected by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading to change in Washington, and I am proud to preserve their stories.

JONATHAN SPARKS—LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

Jonathan was a sweet young man who started off on a rocky note when he was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma cancer at the age of four. He battled this for a year and a half, which involved invasive treatments such as a stem cell transplant. His prognosis was very grim, but thanks be to God he made it and entered Kindergarten right before his 6th birthday.

It took a long time for Jonathan's stamina to improve after undergoing such intensive treatment and as a result, he was bullied as a child. He just couldn't keep up with the other kids during activities. This made him compassionate towards others who were less fortunate than he was, and he would take up for these people or help them in any way he could. Jonathan was always a people person. He would and could strike up a conversation with anyone; he felt just as comfortable talking to a politician as he did a homeless man.

During his teenage years Jonathan felt left out and like he didn't fit in with his peers. He struggled with academics due to what he had been exposed to during the cancer treatments. He was forced out of private school because of this learning disability. He went to public school his junior year, and in trying to fit in he fell in with a crowd he should have stayed away from. As soon as he turned 18, he dropped out of school during his senior year.

Jonathan was passionate about basketball and cooking. He never excelled at basketball because, again, he just couldn't keep up. He suffered from severe back pain due to radiation. But he knew stats about basketball that you wouldn't believe. He loved a lot of NBA teams, but his favorite was Miami Heat. Jonathan could cook anything; he was an avid food network watcher and could have given some of those people a run for their money. He watched "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives," and loved to eat at the places where Guy, the host, did his shows. His dream was to become a chef.

Sometime between the ages of 18 and 20, Jonathan was introduced to Xanax. His mother assumes it was in order to ease his back pain. From there he got into heroin. She does not know when he started using because he was good at keeping it a secret from our family. He came home in April of 2015 and stayed home all summer. He never went anywhere; he just hung out at home watching cooking shows and basketball games.

In August he started working at Pizza Hut. Around the middle of the month he was called by some friends who didn't have a car and needed a ride to the hospital—they were about to have a baby. Two weeks later he spent the Saturday of Labor Day weekend with these two women and their newborn. They went to the local skate park that evening to buy heroin. According to his friends, Jonathan went into the restroom to use and when he emerged he was unable to walk. The women helped him into his own car and then drove him around for 2 or 3 hours thinking that he would sleep it off. Finally, they drove him to the ER and dumped him in front of the door. By this time, Jonathan's body tissue was dying and his organs were shutting down. Jonathan was in a coma for 20 days and died 6 days after his 21st birthday, on September 26, 2015.

NICHOLAS "NICKY" DANIEL TOTH V—PAGOSA
SPRINGS, COLORADO

Nicholas Daniel Toth V was born on December 27, 1995 in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. He was a miracle as far as his parents were concerned—they literally smothered the poor kid. Nicky was his parents shining star. Never in their life did they ever think they would only have 19 years with him.

Nicky was the oldest of his two brothers. The Toth family was blessed with two more sons, Jackson and Harrison. Life was perfect. They were all raised in a beautiful mountain town. We volunteered tirelessly in our community. As parents, the Toths didn't just go to every sporting event their boys had, they coached them. You name it and they did it for their boys. They ate organic foods and planted their own gardens. Life was effortless and delightful.

All of this changed one awful night when Nicky was in 6th grade and sexually violated by one of his peers. After that he was never the same. That same boy went on to bully Nicky and the school district did nothing. The Toth family received no community or school support. They felt abandoned but Nicky felt it the most. Following that year, the Toths decided as a family to move back east to New Jersey in order to be closer to friends and family where they felt they could get the most support, and more importantly, save their Nicholas.

Unfortunately, that one awful night shaped Nicky's teenage path. He didn't talk about it; he wouldn't and couldn't. Instead, Nicky started self-medicating—beginning with alcohol and marijuana. From there he moved to Xanax that he got from other parents' medicine cabinets. Then, Nicky discovered the love of his life, heroin. The Toth family was in turmoil. Nicky was in and out of treatment centers and jail. He missed multiple holidays. He wanted nothing more than to be happy and healthy.

During his active addiction, Nicky was in jail from January 2014 to June 2014 and again from July 2014 to February 2015. He finally came home March 20, 2015. The entire Toth family was so hopeful but also scared. Nicky was at least safe while in jail. He participated in outpatient programs and got a job. His family had no idea he started using again.

In April 2015, Nicky overdosed in his family's home and lived to see another day. Following that night, Nicky went to inpatient treatment in South New Jersey. His family were so hopeful because Nicky completed his 30 day program and organized himself into a sober living home. The person in charge said he had never had such a tenacious applicant. Nicky was ready to start his life. He lived in the house for two weeks.

On Friday, June 12, 2015, Nicky's mother went to see him after work and took him to dinner. She kissed his face, hugged his big shoulders and laughed together for the last time. On the morning of June 14th, the local police came to the Toth family's home to inform them that they lost their son. He was found in Newark. He was all alone.

AIDAN VANDERHEOF—MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA

Aidan Vanderheof grew up surrounded by love and attention. His life had bumps along the way, most of which were created by his family. Aidan's parents divorced when he was about two years old. He lived with mother but had a lot of visitation time with his dad. When he was about twelve, Aidan went to live with his dad in Bismarck and started playing JV football. He had loads of friends and got along easily with everyone. Aidan went back to live with his mother when he was sixteen.

Like any teenager, Aidan pushed the boundaries. He bought a pick-up truck the second he got his driver's license and would haul around as many of his friends as could fit in it. Around that time many family arguments started to emerge and Aidan began having trouble in school. Many nights he wouldn't come home, but he always had an excuse—he fell asleep on a friend's couch, for example. Over time, his absences increased at home and at school. Aidan's mother had